SUBJECTS

ARMED NEGRO UNIT SPREADS IN SOUTH

New Groups to Fight White Terror Are Established in Mississippi and Alabama ARMED NEGRO UNIT SPREADS IN SOUTH

BOGALUSA, La., June 5 — An armed, tough-minded league of Negroes, formed to defend members of their race from white terrorism, is spreading across the South.

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BYLINE
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have estimated from 5,000 to 15,000, he said, but he would not indicate whether their figure was correct. In any case, the membership probably is not large.

The group's main strength is in Louisiana. The incursions across the Mississippi appear to be exploratory, with considerable organizational work still to be done.

Mr. Thomas said the deacons could spread to every Southern state in six or seven months "with hard work."

He is the only full-time organizer. Other members work in local areas in their spare time.

Mr. Thomas visited the deacons in Bogalusa yesterday in the wake of the murder of O'Neal Moore, one of Washington Parish's first Negro deputy sheriffs. He was interviewed at the home of Robert Hicks, a Negro leader whose home has become the headquarters of the Bogalusa civil rights movement.

Richard Haley of New Orleans, the Southern director of the Congress of Racial Equality, participated in the interview. The civil rights group and the deacons are on friendly terms. Many chapters of the deacons are in towns where CORE staff members work.

Mr. Haley said that the connection between the two organizations had begun accidentally in Jonesboro when CORE discovered that its workers were safer with the deacons around.

He said, "The deacons made the difference between safety and bad health last summer for CORE workers in Jonesboro."

Mr. Thomas said the deacons were armed with rifles and pistols. "Everybody owns his own piece," he said.

The organization provides ammunition, which it buys in quantity at a saving. Mr. Thomas hopes to standardize the weapons to effect further savings. He favors the .30-caliber Army carbine and the .38-caliber pistol. Some members have automatic carbines that will fire 30 rounds like a machine gun. Most now use

those of us in CORE have seen the effectiveness of nonviolence in focusing attention on a situation, of drawing sympathetic public opinion."

But public sympathy usually is a delayed reaction, he said.

"That girl there —" Mr. Haley pointed to a teen-ager walking down the street — "she may go uptown and walk a picket line today and come back with her arm mangled, maybe dangling by the skin. Now, the good people of Minneapolis may not react to that until next month.

"The deacons have the effect of lowering the minimum potential for danger NOW. That is a valuable function, and one that CORE can't perform."

He said that civil rights workers in CORE still believed in nonvolence but that they also appreciated the deacons.

"Protected nonviolence is apt

to be more [illegible] participants t[illegible] he said.

Mr. Haley s[illegible] the white reaction to the civil rights movement had changed. Three or four years ago, he said, the worst a[illegible]rator had to fear was [illegible]ished off a restaurant sea[illegible]oused with catsup. Now, [illegible]e intensification of the white extremist reaction, a[illegible]istrator's life is in dan[illegible] said.

"But I still have [illegible]ve in my own mind that nonviolence is more effective than even the deacons." Mr. Hale [illegible] "But I couldnt say [illegible]rnest Thomas, 'I want yo[illegible] aside any protection you have and go along with my policy.' In fact, it is likely that if any situation arises, I would be kind of happy to go along with his."

Mr. Thomas said the F. B. I.

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